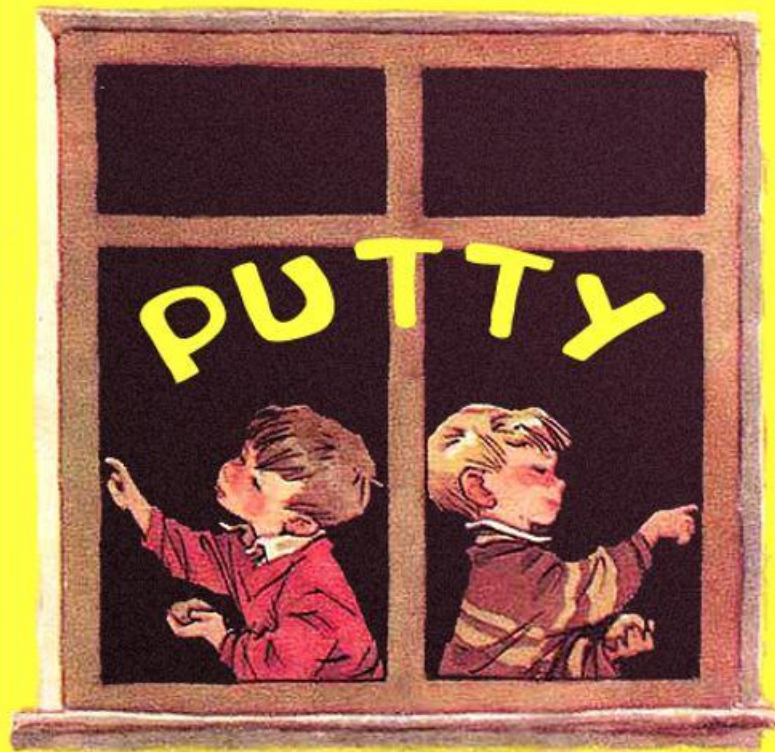


N.Nosov



Translated by Jim Riordan

Illustrated by Y.Migunov



The glazier came round one day to putty the window frames for the cold winter. Kostya and Shurik stood watching him finish the job.

When he had gone, they prized out the putty from the windows and began to model animals from it. The trouble was the animals did not come out right. Then Kostya did a snake and said to Shurik,

"See what I've made."

Shurik had a close look and said,

"Liver sausage."

Kostya took offence at that and hid the putty in his pocket. Then they went off together to the pictures.

All the way Shurik worried about the putty.

"What's happened to the putty?" he kept asking.

At last Kostya told him,

"Here it is in my pocket. You didn't think I'd eaten it, did you?"

They bought their tickets at the cinema and also got themselves two peppermint bars to eat while they were watching the performance. All of a sudden the bell went and Kostya rushed off to get two seats; Shurik meanwhile got stuck in the crowd.

Kostya found two good seats, sat down on one and 'booked' the other with his piece of putty. Suddenly a stranger came up and sat down on the putty.

Kostya said to him,

"That place is taken, it's for Shurik."

"Who the blazes is Shurik? I'm sitting here," said the man.





At that moment Shurik came rushing up and took his seat on the other side of Kostya.

"Where's the putty?" he asked.

"Ssshhh!" whispered Kostya winking in the man's direction.

"Who's that?" asked Shurik.

"No idea."

"What are you scared of him for?"

"He's sitting on the putty."

"Then what did you give it to him for?"

"I didn't, he just sat on it."

"Then take it."

At that point the lights went out and the film started.

"Excuse me, mister," said Kostya. "Give me my putty."

"What putty?"

"The putty we dug out of the window frame."

"Dug out of the window frame?"

"That's right. Let's have it, mister."

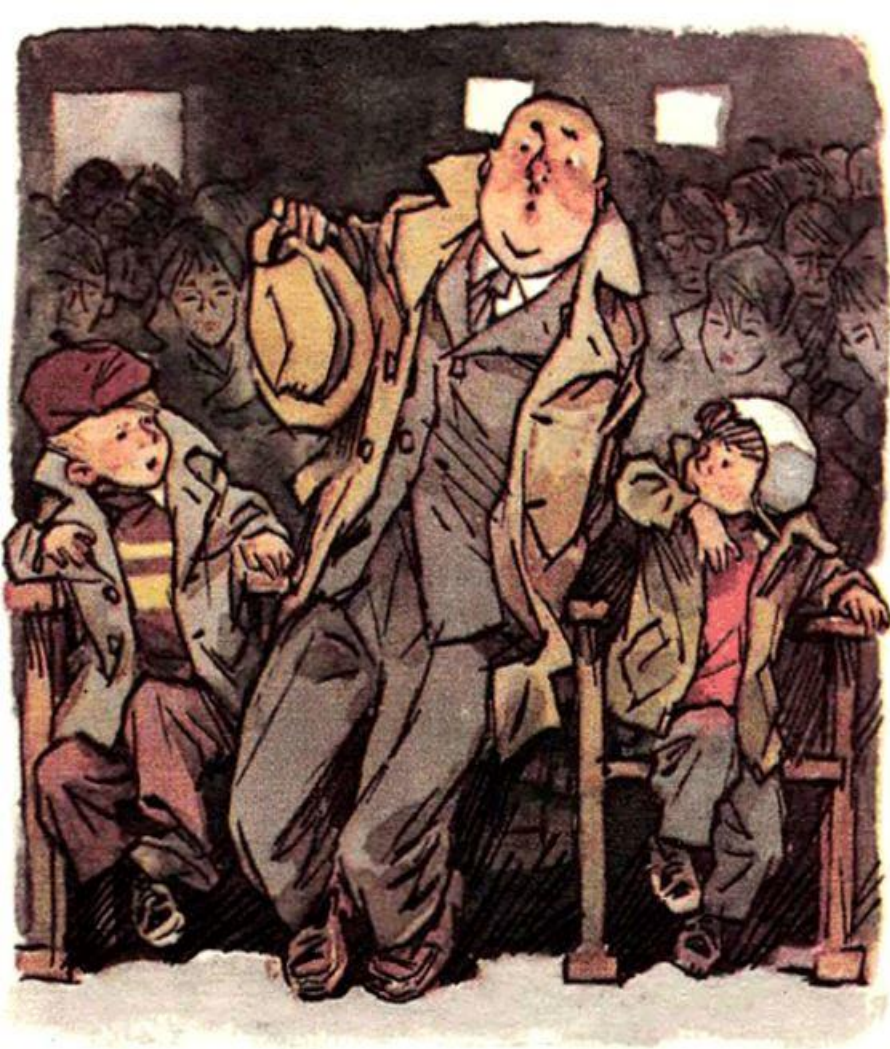
"But I didn't take it."

"We know you didn't take it. You're sitting on it."

"Sitting?!"

"Yes."

The man jumped out of his seat.



"Then why didn't you say so before, you nit?!" he shouted.

"Well, I did tell you the seat was taken."

"When exactly did you tell me? When I'd already sat down!"

"How was I to know you were going to sit here?"

The stranger stood up and began to feel around on the seat.

"Well, where is this putty, you nincompoop?" he hissed between his teeth.

"Hold on, there it is!" cried Kostya.

"Where?"

"There, all over the seat. Don't worry, we'll clean it all off straightaway."

"You'd better, you little twerp," spluttered the man.

"Sit down!" cried voices behind them.

"I can't," explained the man. "There's putty on the seat."



At long last the boys had scraped off all the putty.

"It's all right now," they said. "Sit down."

The man took his seat.

And all was quiet again. Kostya wanted to watch the film in peace, but he suddenly heard Shurik whisper,

"Have you eaten your bar yet?"

"Not yet. Have you?"

"No, I haven't either. Let's eat it now."

"Yes, all right."

Crunching began. Kostya suddenly spluttered and wheezed,

"Shurik, what's your bar like?"

"Yum, yum."

"Mine's horrible. It's all gooey. Probably melted in my pocket."

"Where's the putty?"

"It's here, in my pocket... Just a minute! This isn't putty, it's my peppermint bar. Ugh! I must have mixed them up in the dark. Oo-erh! No wonder it didn't taste very nice."

In his disgust, Kostya threw the putty onto the floor.

"Why did you throw it away?" asked Shurik.

"What do I want it for now?"

"Maybe you don't, but I might," hissed Shurik and crawled under the seat in search of the putty.

"Where is it?" he said, beginning to get angry. "How can I find anything in the dark?"

"All right, I'll find it," said Kostya getting down on the floor to look under the seats.

"Ouch!" suddenly came a voice from down below. "I say, mister, get off!"

"Who's that?"

"It's me."

"Who's me?"

"Me, Kostya. Get off me."

"But I'm not on you."

"Yes you are, you're treading on my hand."

"Serves you right for crawling under the seat."

"I was looking for my putty."

Kostya crawled under the seat and suddenly found himself nose to nose with Shurik.

"Who's that?" he said in a frightened voice.

"It's me, Shurik."

"Well, this is me, Kostya."

"Found it?"

"I haven't found anything."

"Neither have I."





"Maybe we'd better watch the rest of the film, otherwise we'll scare the living daylights out of the audience; they'll think dogs are poking their noses round their legs."

Kostya and Shurik crawled back under the seats and sat down finally — just in time to see the word "END" flash up on the screen.

The patrons all rushed towards the exit. The two boys followed them into the street.

"What sort of film were we watching?" asked Kostya. "I couldn't make head or tail of it."

"You don't think I understood it, do you?" answered Shurik. "What a load of rubbish. Fancy showing films like that!"